

~~SECRET~~

65-1302

12 March 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR**SUBJECT: Vietnam Estimates**

1. We have kept the judgments of our recent NIE's under continuing review and believe that no new evidence or situations have arisen in the past few weeks which would warrant any change in their main judgments, with respect either to South Vietnam or to the Communists.

2. So far, Communist reactions to such US and US/GVN military moves as have been initiated to date have been about as estimated. The Communist states have complained loudly. The USSR has made various noises about negotiations, undefined. We have no firm evidence of any major military moves or deployments on the part of either Communist China or North Vietnam. Most importantly, there has been no diminution in the scale or intensity of VC action in the South, or any indications of diminution in DRV guidance and support of that action. We interpret this to

V-1

~~SECRET~~

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

SECRET

mean either that Hanoi's leaders are still uncertain as to US intentions, or, perhaps more likely, have concluded that US military sanctions are not likely to become severe enough in the near future to necessitate any major change of DRV military or diplomatic policy.

3. We continue to believe that a further moderate intensification of US air attacks -- e.g., making them somewhat more frequent, or extending them a little further into North Vietnam -- would be unlikely either to produce early concessions or to provoke large-scale military attacks from the DRV. (SNIE 10-3/1-65, paragraphs 7-10)

4. A review is presently being initiated [redacted] of current VC strength and capabilities. It is [redacted] thesis that the US intelligence community may have been underestimating the VC on these scores, especially concerning VC-ARVN unit comparisons. If review confirms his thesis, we will in turn have to review our estimates of the VC's military capabilities and, possibly, intentions.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

SHERMAN KENT
Chairman

- 2 -

SECRET

FROM THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY